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MUSIC AMONG THE POETS AND POETICAL WRITERS.

By MARY COWDEN CLARKE.

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THE Father of English Poesy, in his own quaint fashion, has noted the wearisomeness of monotony in music—of playing perpetually the same thing :—

"For though that the best harper upon live
Would on the bestè sounded jolly harp
That ever was, with all his fingers five
Touch aye one string, or aye one warble harp,
Were his nailès pointed never so sharp,
It shouldè maken every wight to dull
To hear his glee, and of his strokès full."

Chaucer.

He has multiplied mentions of Minstrelsy :—

"Before them stood such instruments of soun'
That Orpheus, nor of Thebes, Amphion,
Ne maden never such a melody :
At every course in came loud minstrelsy,
That never Joab trumped for to hear,
Nor he, Theodomas, yet half so clear
At Thebes when the city was in doubt."

Chaucer.

"While that this king sat thus in his nobley,
Harking his minstrels their thingès play,
Before him at his board deliciously,
In at the hall door, &c."—Chaucer.

"When that this Tartar king, this Cambuscan,
Rose from his board, there as he sat full high,
Before him goeth the loud minstrelsy,
Till he came to his chamber of parements,
There as they sounden divers instruments,
That it is like a heaven for to hear."—Chaucer.

"And before them went minstrels many one,
As harpès, pipès, lutès, and psalt'ry,
Allè in green; and on their headès bare,
Of divers flowerès made full craftily,
All in a suit, goodly chaplets they wear,
And so, dancing, into the mead they fare;
In mid the which they found a tuft that was
All overspread with flowerès in compas,
Whereto they inclined every one
With great reverence, and that full humbly;
And at the last there began anon
A lady for to sing right womanly
A bargaret* in praising the daisy;
For (as methought) among her notès sweet
She said 'Si douce est la Marguerite!'
Then they all answered her in fere,†
So passing well and so pleasantly,
That it was a most blissful noise to hear."

Chaucer.

"And to the minstrels made request
That in encreasing of the feast
They woulden touchen their cordès,
And with some new joyous accordès
Ymove the people to gladness
And prayeden of all gentleness
Each to painen them for the day
To show his cunning and his play :
Then began soundès marvellous,
Entuned with accordès joyous,
Round about and in all the tents,
With thousandès of instruments."—Chaucer.

"There mightest thou see these fluters,
Minstrelès and eke jongelers,
That well to singen did their pain :
Some sungen songès of Lorraine;
For in Lorraine their notès be
Full sweeter than in this countree."—Chaucer.

"The bard obey'd; and taking from his side,
Where it in seemly sort depending hung,
His British harp, its speaking strings he tried,
The which with skilful touch he deftly strung,
Till tinkling in clear symphony they rung.
Then, as he felt the Muses come along,
Light o'er the chords his raptur'd hand he flung,
And played a prelude to his rising song."—Thomson.

"The wind blew hollow frae the hills,
By fits the sun's departing beam
Look'd on the fading yellow woods
That wav'd o'er Lugar's winding stream :
Beneath a craggy steep, a bard,
Laden with years and meikle pain,
In loud lament bewail'd his lord,
Whom death had all untimely ta'en.
He lean'd him to an ancient aik,
Whose trunk was mould'ring down with years;
His locks were bleached white wi' time,
His hoary cheek was wet wi' tears!
And as he touch'd his trembling harp,
And as he tun'd his doleful sang,
The winds, lamenting through their caves,
To echo bore the notes along."—Burns.

"He sat him down at a pillar's base,
And pass'd his hand athwart his face;
Like one in dreary musing mood,
Declining was his attitude;
His head was drooping on his breast,
Fever'd, throbbing, and oppress'd :
And o'er his brow, so downward bent,
Oft his beating fingers went,
Hurriedly, as you may see
Your own run over the ivory key,
Ere the measur'd tone is taken
By the chords you would awaken."—Byron.

"All is gentle : naught
Stirs rudely; but, congenial with the night,
Whatever walks is gliding like a spirit.
The tinklings of some vigilant guitars
Of sleepless lovers to a wakeful mistress,
And cautious opening of the casement, showing
That he is not unheard; while her young hand,
Fair as the moonlight of which it seems part,
So delicately white, it trembles in
The act of opening the forbidden lattice,
To let in love through music, makes his heart
Thrill like his lyre-strings at the sight;—the dash
Phosphoric of the oar, or rapid twinkle
Of the far lights of skimming gondolas,
And the responsive voices of the choir
Of boatmen answering back with verse for verse;
Some dusky shadow checkering the Rialto;
Some glimmering palace roof or tapering spire,
Are all the sights and sounds which here pervade
The ocean-born and earth-commanding City."—Byron.

CRYSTAL PALACE.

THE grand Choral Demonstration, which took place on the 2nd of July, was crowned with complete success both in an artistic and a pecuniary sense. The band and chorus assembled in the vast orchestra amounted to 2500 performers. The band included the bands of the Sacred Harmonic Society, the Royal Italian Opera, the Amateur Musical Society, and the Crystal Palace, together with the Crystal Palace wind band, and the full bands of the Grenadier and Coldstream Guards. The chorus was composed of the fourteen hundred members of the London amateur division of the great Handel Festival Choir, comprising

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* Bargaret—bergerette, a pastoral ditty. † In fere—together.

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within its ranks the chorus of the Sacred Harmonic Society, and including selections from all the other metropolitan choral societies; the leading professional chorus singers; the two hundred singers of the Bradford Choir; with deputations from many of the leading provincial choral societies and the cathedrals; the musical arrangements being under the direction of the committee of the Sacred Harmonic Society, with Mr. Costa as the conductor, and Mr. Brownsmith presiding at the organ. At three o'clock the concert commenced with the Hundredth Psalm, which was impressively delivered, the whole audience standing during the performance. This was followed by the *Venite exultemus*, to Tallis's Chant, also given with precision and emphasis. Mendelssohn's trio, "Lift thine eyes," was admirably sung by Madame Clara Novello, Miss Palmer, and Mrs. Lockey, and the following chorus was vigorously interpreted. Ample justice was rendered to Costa's chorus from *Eli*, "The Lord is good," and the audience appeared to be greatly pleased with the effect. Then followed Mendelssohn's quartet, "Holy, holy, holy," which was beautifully sung by Madame Clara Novello, Madame Sherrington, Miss Palmer, and Mrs. Lockey. The exquisite beauty of Mozart's motett, "Ave verum," was brought out with the utmost truth and delicacy. The war song from *Eli*, "Philistines, hark!" by Mr. Reeves and the chorus, was a complete and well deserved triumph; Mr. Reeves was in excellent voice, and sang with infinite energy and vigour. At the commencement of the second part the clear and resonant voice of Madame Clara Novello was displayed to advantage in the solo part of Handel's chorus, "Oh the pleasures of the plains," from *Acis and Galatea*. Mendelssohn's part-song, "Oh forest, deep and gloomy," proved to be well-adapted to the locale of the concert: it was sung, as it should be, without accompaniment. All the parts were observed to a nicety; and the *pianos* and *fortes* were marked with good effect. In obedience to the universal demand, the last verse was repeated. Rossini's prayer from the *Mose in Egitto*, accompanied by twelve harps, imparted variety to the selections; and was succeeded by the universal favorite, "See the conquering hero comes; the trio was magnificently sung by Madame Clara Novello, Madame Sherrington, and Mrs. Lockey. Mozart's solo and chorus from *Idomeneo*, "Calm is the glassy ocean," offered a favorable opportunity to Madame Sherrington, who sang it in a highly artistic manner, and was ably supported by the chorus. The prayer from *Masaniello* was given with commendable care and appropriate sentiment. The National Anthem terminated the programme, amidst overwhelming plaudits, a large share being bestowed on the splendid and dramatic manner in which the chief verses were sung by Madame Clara Novello; the exertions of this lady received the most energetic praise from a party of the royal family who were present, as well as from the whole assembly generally.

All the arrangements, both with respect to the comfort of the audience and the convenience of the executants, seemed of a thoroughly satisfactory character, a fact which is in a great measure attributable to the judgment and exertions of the present manager, Mr. Bowley. The number of visitors present amounted in all to 19,874, of whom 14,847, were admitted by tickets, and 5,027 by payment at the doors. The whole of the music, published by Mr. Novello, in a convenient shape, was sold during the performance within the building, and added greatly to the pleasure of all the amateurs present among the audience.

Mr. Benedict's Grand Festival Concert, with 1000 performers, vocal and instrumental, took place on the 16th ult., and attracted a very large audience. The programme comprised some excellent instrumental music, beginning with the overture to *Masaniello*. There was also a triple concerto for three pianofortes, by Miss Arabella Goddard, Mr. Benedict, and Mr. Lindsay Sloper; and a concertante for four violins. The vocal selections included some effective solos, by Miss Stabbach, Miss Louisa Pyne, Madame Weiss, Miss Dolby, and Madame Gassier, and by Mr. Sims Reeves, Mr. Weiss, and Herr Deck. The

choruses were very few, but were well executed. The performance throughout was highly creditable, and was of a character to give general satisfaction to the audience. A similar festival, by the same performers, was fixed to take place on the 30th of July.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The late hour at which Advertisements reach us, interferes much with their proper classification.

Colored Envelopes are sent to all Subscribers whose payment in advance is exhausted. The paper will be discontinued where the Subscriber neglects to renew. We again remind those who are disappointed in getting back numbers, that only the music pages are stereotyped, and of the rest of the paper, only sufficient are printed to supply the current sale.

We would request those who send us country newspapers, wishing us to read particular paragraphs, to mark the passage, by cutting a slit in the paper near it.

We cannot undertake to return offered contributions; the authors, therefore, will do well to retain copies.

Brief Chronicle of the last Month.

BEDFORD.—The members of the Harmonic Society gave their concert at the Assembly Room on the 14th ult. The performance consisted of the second and third parts of the *Messiah*. The Rev. H. E. Havergal conducted. On this occasion the society engaged the services of Miss Street. Mr. Nann, Mr. Rose, and Mr. Diemer, in addition to the usual amateur instrumentalists, rendered valuable aid. The music was well sung, and the audience was loud in applauding the successful efforts of their fellow townsmen.

BIRMINGHAM MUSICAL FESTIVAL.—An advertisement in our columns of to-day contains the outline of the intended performances, together with the names of the principal singers who have been engaged by the committee for this approaching musical celebration. In a former notice we drew attention to the programme for the week, and we have now only to remark that the vocal staff selected to do justice to the interesting series of works then detailed appears to be fully equal to the occasion. The soprani are Mesdames Clara Novello, Castellani, and Victoire Balfe; contralti, Mesdames Albani and Viardot, and Miss Dolby; tenors, Messrs. S. Reeves, Montem Smith, and Tamberlik; basses, Signor Belletti and Mr. Weiss. For the evening performances Signor Ronconi is also engaged.

BIRMINGHAM.—The Tonic Sol-Fa Association held a concert in the Music Hall on the 5th of July. The hall was well filled. The music was well performed under the direction of Mr. J. R. Lee. Mr. F. Barnby, organist.

BOW AND MILE END HARMONIC SOCIETY.—On the 29th of June this society gave a performance, the last of the season, at the Music Room, Cottage Grove, Mile End. The programme consisted of two parts: the first being Mendelssohn's 95th Psalm, "O come, let us sing," and the other part comprised a selection from Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, and several glees, &c. The whole of this performance was given in the best style, and most creditably to all concerned in the performance. Mr. Ivimey conducted, and Mr. Prout accompanied on the pianoforte.

BRIDLINGTON QUAY.—On July 13th, Mr. W. Turner, organist of the Priory Church, gave two concerts at the Victoria Rooms. Miss Maria Wilson, of Hull, and Messrs. Plowman, Hird, Hudson and Holmes, from the Institution for the Blind, York, were the artistes engaged, and they acquitted themselves with their usual ability.

CHERTSEY.—The first annual festival of the Choral Association was held on the 29th of June, when a full choral service was performed at the parish church. Mr. Samuel Gee, the musical director to the association, presided at the organ.

DOVER.—The Choral Society gave a performance of sacred and secular music on the 29th ult., at the Wellington Hall, under the direction of Mr. E. Barnes. The execution of the music was very satisfactory.

EBLEY.—An evening concert took place in the British School on Monday, July 12th. The principal vocalists